

Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel

Report of the Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel

To All Member Authorities

In accordance with agreed practice I am reporting on matters recently dealt with at meetings of the Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel in order to draw your attention to issues of wider interest and/or implications.

24 July 2017

Chairing my first Panel meeting it was helpful that the agenda included a number of Annual Reports on activity during 2016/17. In addition to the reports by the Secretary on the allocation of **Home Office Grant** for the running of the Panel and on the **management of complaints about the conduct of the PCC** (of which none met the applicable criteria) we received the **Police and Crime Commissioners own Annual Report** on the delivery of his Strategy: Safer Fairer, United Communities for Staffordshire.

Key issues in the Annual Report debated by us included:

- Domestic Violence – The Deputy Commissioner is leading on initiatives to promote awareness of Domestic Violence and to provide support for victims. The Commissioner reported that through joint commissioning across the County and City of Stoke-on-Trent more front line services had been made available. Consistency in the quality of service was a key aim whilst retaining flexibility to respond to differing needs
- MASH (Multi-agency safeguarding hub) – Responding to a request for assurances of continued support for the MASH, the Commissioner explained his wish to develop local delivery teams with the MASH serving as a ‘hub’
- Video Links with Courts – The Commissioner called for improved alignment between the Courts Service and the Ministry of Justice to facilitate better progress in this area
- Modern Day Slavery - Public and agency awareness had been raised via a conference staged by the Deputy Commissioner. Distinguishing between modern day slavery and low pay issues was a major challenge.

We then considered the Commissioners **Business Case for the Joint Governance of Police, Fire and Rescue Services in Staffordshire**. The report set out the governance options available under the Policing and Crime Act 2017: Representation, Governance and Single Employer, and explained the requirement to demonstrate how each could be in the interests of Efficiency, Effectiveness, Economy or Public Safety. Various criteria had been applied with the Governance Model being recommended in the Business Case and supported by the Commissioner.

The County Council had recently referred the Business Case to a workshop of members to consider in detail. The Police and Crime Panel decided to defer its own decision on whether to support the Case until they had participated in that workshop (see below).

The meeting continued by considering the Force and OPCC Joint **Provisional Financial Outturn for 2016/17** which showed an underspend of £347k on the original budget of £180.638m.

The OPCC had underspent partly due to lower than anticipated take up of grants and a longer lead in period for the IT contract with Boeing.

The Force reported an overspend with a key contributory factor being a £1.4m overspend on staff costs particularly for front line staff. Much of our discussion was on staffing levels and the deployment of personnel with the Commissioner reporting that the new Chief Constable, Gareth Morgan wished to pursue projects which addressed mobility, flexibility, visibility and productivity. The pace of the changing demands on policing were obviously a major consideration.

We received an update on the Commissioners **Medium Term Financial Strategy** (MTFS) for the period to 2020/21 hearing that the anticipated funding gap by that time would be £11.1m compared to the £10.5m forecast in 2016. A review of the funding formula aimed at giving Police funding a more stable basis, was to commence in 2018. On Treasury Management the Commissioner reported on the need to increase the agreed Borrowing Limit in order to fund the planned capital expenditure strategy. A review of costs had been carried out and savings identified in order to strengthen the Reserves in order to meet a number of one-off costs.

We will be receiving an update on the MTFS at our November 2017 meeting.

14 August 2017 Informal Workshop – PCC Business Case for Joint Governance of Police, Fire and Rescue Services in Staffordshire.

As mentioned above we attended the County Council organised workshop where differing views on the proposed Governance Model were voiced. Reference was also made to the pros and cons of the other options.

The Police and Crime Panel members present at the Workshop concluded that they supported the Commissioner's Business Case and he has been notified accordingly.

David Williams

Chairman – Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel